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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine whether a difference exists between the grade achievement of Mexican American and Anglo college students. The study was conducted at the University of Texas at El Paso. A stratified random sample of 480 students equally divided between Anglos and Mexican Americans was drawn from unmarried full-time students who attended the university in the fall of 1969. Stratification was made on the basis of ethnic group, sex, college class, and college enrolled in. Major findings were that Mexican American college students do have significantly lower grade point averages than Anglo students enrolled in the same university; when the entire sample was considered, no significant differences were found when the type of high school attended was considered; and a comparison of grade point averages in the 5 colleges showed no significant differences between the groups. All findings were tentative pending the discovery of 25 missing samples. (PS)

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GRADE POINT AVERAGE OF MEXICAN AMERICAN AND ANGLO
COLLEGE STUDENTS ATTENDING THE SAME UNIVERSITY

by

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Since the beginning of the War on Poverty in 1964, we have become increasingly aware of the disparity of educational achievement between disadvantaged ethnic minorities and the rest of America. Here in the Southwest a deep concern with the problems and poverty of Mexican Americans has manifest itself. Clearly this meeting shows that concern since it has chosen to examine the educational patterns and problems besetting Mexican Americans.

The 1970 census statistics clearly indicate why we should be concerned with Mexican American education. Of persons over 25 in the total U.S. 4.6% had completed less than five years of school while 58.2% had completed four years of high school or more. Comparable statistics for Mexican Americans show that 26.7% had completed less than five years of school and only 33%⁽¹⁾ had completed four years of high school or more. There is a small but positive change for the younger age group in, at least, Texas⁽²⁾ Unfortunately at the time of this writing, all we had available was the census report for that state. This indicated that in the younger aged group 18-24, the total percentage who completed 4 years of high school or more was 59.7% while among the Spanish surname and Spanish language group the percentage was 39.7%. For what it is worth, the difference in high school completions between Mexican Americans and the rest of the population for the age group over 25 was 25.2%, while for the 18-24 age group in Texas it was only 20%. Hopefully in time these percentages will disappear and there will be no difference between educational achievement of Mexican-Americans and the rest of the population.

Obviously these numbers reflect the higher drop-out rate prevalent among Mexican-Americans and also their smaller enrollments in Higher Education.⁽³⁾ Both Carter⁽⁴⁾ and Crossland⁽⁵⁾ indicate that Mexican Americans had a very low rate of college enrollment. Carter's study was based on 1967 enrollment, while Crossland used enrollments in 1969. The low rate of Mexican-American college enrollment, however, is not the concern of this study. What we are concerned with is the grade achievement of Mexican Americans who are enrolled in college compared to their non-Mexican-American counter-parts. In this paper we will define and identify Mexican Americans by Spanish Surname and will call all other students in our sample who are not Mexican American, Anglo.

The University we have taken our sample from, the University of Texas at El Paso, is one that has a significant enrollment of Spanish surname students (30.1% at the time of our sample). This, we believe, is one of the largest Spanish surname enrollments in the country. The community in which the University is found is at least 50% Mexican-American. The University is further characterized as having low tuition costs, a commuter type student body and relatively lenient admission standards.

The sample was drawn from unmarried full time students who attended the University in the fall of 1969. The total student enrollment at that time was 10,500 of whom 6,380 were full time unmarried students. We attempted to draw a stratified random sample of 480 students from this group equally divided among Anglos and Mexican Americans. Our stratification was made on the basis of ethnic group, (Spanish or non-Spanish surname), sex, college class and college enrolled in. Our procedure was to phone the students selected by the table of random numbers; from these aforementioned cohorts, and to administer a questionnaire, devised by us, to them. We also administered to them Pace's College and University

Environment Scales (CUES). Of the 480 students contacted, 62.7% or 301 students responded. Of these three hundred and one students, one hundred forty eight were Anglo and one hundred fifty three were Mexican American.

Grade Point Averages (G.P.A.'s) were not available for the entire group and the sample we shall be talking about in this paper has 25 fewer students than in the entire sample. Of these eleven were Anglo and fourteen Mexican American. However slippages keep occurring for when we break these down by High Schools the students attended, we lose two more Anglo and three more Mexican American respondents and when we break it down by Colleges they were enrolled in, we lose no Anglos and four Mexican American respondents. (Table I) These missing cases, do in fact change the levels of confidence as on examination of Table II and Table III clearly indicate. It so happens that the Anglo student G.P.A.'s lost for the High School groups were all above the median and the Mexican American student G.P.A.'s lost were all below the median which changes our p from between .05 and .02 to .10 and .05 for the entire sample. Thus we cannot speak with assurance about the missing twenty-five cases, but can only report the analysis of the data as we have it thus far.

TABLE I

Number of Anglo and Mexican American Respondents
Considered in the Study

	Anglo	Mexican American	Total
	No. - Loss	No. - Loss	No. - Loss
Entire Sample	148 - 0	153 - 0	301 - 0
University G. P. A.'s available	137 - 11	139 - 14	276 - 25
University G.P.A.'s of High School Groups	135 - 13	136 - 17	272 - 29
University G. P. A.'s available of College Groups	137 - 14	135 - 17	169 - 32

Our problem is to find out whether Mexican American students in college do in fact have a statistically lower G.P.A. than their Anglo counterparts. In other words does the educational difference that exists between Mexican-Americans and Anglos persist into college and is it manifest even among those chosen few of both groups who have managed to enter college? Among these rather select group of scholars is there a difference in G.P.A.'s that indicate that educational differences between Mexican-American and Anglo students continue even into higher education?

From the data herein assembled and analyzed there is no clear cut answer. When we match G.P.A.'s of the entire sample we discover that there is a statistically significant difference (less than .05 level of confidence but more than the .02 level) between Mexican American students and Anglos. The Anglos as a group have higher G.P.A.'s than the Mexican-Americans as a group (Table II).

However when we analyze the same data in terms of high school attended and in terms of college enrolled in, we find no statistically significant difference (at least at the .05 level of confidence.) (Table III) (Table IV)

TABLE II

Total Group Comparison of Grade Point Averages of Mexican-American and Anglo Students Attending the Same University

G.P.A.'s	Anglos		Mexican American		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0.0 - 0.5	1	1%	1	1%	2	1%
0.6 - 1.0	1	1%	6	4%	7	2%
1.1 - 1.5	6	4%	7	5%	13	5%
1.6 - 2.0	20	14%	30	22%	50	18%
2.1 - 2.5	38	28%	42	30%	80	29%
2.6 - 3.0	41	30%	27	19%	68	25%
3.1 - 3.5	23	17%	22	16%	45	16%
3.6 - 4.0	7	5%	4	3%	11	4%
Totals	137	100%	139	100%	276	100%

$$.05 > P > .02$$

$$\text{Median Test } x^2 = 4.70$$

$$.05 < P < .02$$

$$\text{Median entire sample} = 2.42$$

For Table III we divided our sample of students into four high school categories which were mutually exclusive and all inclusive. Since the largest number of our students come from local high schools we were able to set up three categories of high schools according to the ethnicity of the student body attending these high schools. These categories were Mexican-American, for schools whose students were largely Mexican-American, Anglo, for schools whose students were largely Anglo and mixed, for schools whose students come in more or less equal numbers from both

ethnic groups. The fourth category was composed of students who come from high schools outside the El Paso area. All schools had both Anglos and Mexican-Americans in their student bodies but the numbers of these ethnic groups varied according to the typology we used.

We compared Anglos and Mexican-American students in each category with each other in order to determine whether there was indeed a statistically significant difference in G.P.A.'s of these two groups. An examination of Table III indicates there were no significant differences at the .05 level of confidence. Even the total, as we have previously written, now reveals no statistically significant results using this level of confidence. It is true that in all cases but one (Mexican American high schools) we have a greater number of Anglo student G.P.A.'s above the median than there are Mexican American student G.P.A.'s above the median. However the results are not statistically significant..

TABLE III

Comparison of Grade Point Averages
of Mexican American and Anglo Students Attending
the Same University by Type of High School Attended

Grade	MEXICAN AMERICAN		ANGLO		MIXED		OTHER		TOTAL	
	Anglo	M.A.	Anglo	M.A.	Anglo	M.A.	Anglo	M.A.	Anglo	M.A.
0.0-0.5	0-0%	0	1- 2%	1-10%	0	0	0	0	1-1%	1-1%
0.6-1.0	0-0%	4-5%	0- 0%	0- 0%	0	1-3%	1-5%	0	1-1%	5-4%
1.1-1.5	2-9%	2-2%	2- 4%	0- 0%	2- 5%	5-13%	0-0%	0	6-4%	7-5%
1.6-2.0	5-24%	15-19%	8-15%	3-30%	6-15%	8-21%	1-5%	2-29%	20-15%	28-20%
~~2.1-2.5~~	~~5-24%~~	~~23-28%~~	~~15-28%~~	~~3-30%~~	~~10-26%~~	~~13-34%~~	~~7-30%~~	~~3-43%~~	~~37-27%~~	~~42-31%~~
2.6-3.0	5-24%	20-25%	15-28%	1-10%	15-39%	5-13%	6-26%	1-14%	41-30%	27-20%
3.1-3.5	4-19%	14-17%	11-21%	2-20%	4-10%	5-13%	4-17%	1-14%	23-17%	22-16%
3.6-4.0	0-0%	3-4%	1-2%	0-0%	2-5%	1-3%	4-17%	0	6-5%	4-3%
Total	21-100%	81-100%	53-100%	10-100%	39-100%	38-100%	23-100%	7-100%	135-100%	136-100%

Median Test

p=1.000

Median=2.41

p=.17

Median=2.46

 $.10 > p > .05$ ~~.10 < p < .05~~

Median=2.34

p=.15

Median=2.57

 $.10 > p > .05$ ~~.10 < p < .05~~

Median=2.42

Median Line —

There are some other interesting ideas than can be gathered from Table III. Mexican-American students from predominantly Mexican-American high schools obtain the same kind of G.P.A.'s as Anglos from these kind of schools. In all other cases, predominantly Anglo high schools, mixed Anglo and Mexican-American high schools and out of town high schools Mexican-American students do not do as well in G.P.A.'s as Anglos who went to these same kind of high schools. Why? It may be because of our data. We have very small numbers of Mexican-American students in the Anglo and

out of town high schools. However, we do have almost an even number of Anglo and Mexican-American students who come from the mixed high schools. Why should they, as a group, achieve lower G.F.A.'s than their Anglo counterparts? Is it a psychological factor? Is it a self fulfilling prophecy, that they cannot do as well as Anglos, which has been thrust upon them by their high school teachers and fellow Anglo students? Are they indeed, less able? Is it a matter of social class? Do the better middle class Mexican-American students come from predominantly Mexican-American high schools? Only further research can answer these questions. However, from the data it would appear that our Mexican-American college students as a group have better G.P.A.'s when they come from predominantly Mexican-American high schools. Further proof of this is offered when we compare Anglo students from Anglo high schools with Mexican Americans students from Mexican-American high schools. Here again there is almost no difference in their G.P.A.'s (Table IV)

TABLE IV
Grade Point Average of Mexican American
and Anglo Students by High School Attendance

Grade Point Average	Anglos in Anglo School		Mexican Americans in Mexican-American School	
	No.	%	No.	%
0.0 - 0.5	1	2%	0	0%
0.6 - 1.0	0	0%	4	5%
1.1 - 1.5	2	4%	2	2%
1.6 - 2.0	8	15%	15	19%
2.1 - 2.5	15	28%	23	28%
2.6 - 3.0	15	28%	20	25%
3.1 - 3.5	11	21%	14	17%
3.6 - 4.0	1	2%	3	4%
Total	53	100%	81	100%
G.P.A. Not Available	3	5%	9	10%
	Median Test			
	$\chi^2 = .13.2$			$.95 > p > .90$

Our last comparison is between Mexican-American students and Anglo students attending the same College. The University of Texas at El Paso has five colleges, Liberal Arts, Education, Business, Engineering and Science. A comparison of Mexican-American and Anglo students again reveals no significant difference at the .05 level of confidence.

However, in comparing the two groups of students it can be seen that Mexican-American students do in fact have better G.P.A.'s as a group in some Colleges than in others. There is almost no difference between the two groups in the College of Business ($.95 > p > .90$). There is some difference in the College of Engineering ($p = .50$) and of Science ($p = .56$). There is a greater amount of difference in the other two colleges, Liberal Arts ($.50 > p > .30$) and Education ($.20 > p > .10$). In these two Colleges more Anglos achieve G.P.A.'s above the median than do Mexican Americans. However, none of these meet the confidence level (.05), that we have set to indicate an acceptable statistical significance.

TABLE V

Comparison of Anglo and Mexican American
Students by College Enrollment

G.P.A.'s	Business				Science				Engineering				Liberal Arts				Education				Totals			
	Anglo No.	%	M.A. No.	%	Anglo No.	%	M.A. No.	%	Anglo No.	%	M.A. No.	%	Anglo No.	%	M.A. No.	%	Anglo No.	%	M.A. No.	%	Anglo No.	%	M.A. No.	%
0.0-0.5	0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0-0	1-2	1-2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	1-1	1-1	1-1	1-1
0.6-1.0	0-0	0-0	1-6	1-11	0-0	0-0	1-11	1-11	0-0	0-0	1-7	1-7	1-2	1-2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	1-2	1-2	1-1	1-1	5-4	5-4
1.1-1.5	2-11	4-22	4-22	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	2-13	2-13	2-13	2-13	4-8	1-2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	6-4	6-4	7-5	7-5
1.6-2.0	3-17	2-11	2-11	1-11	6-23	1-11	1-11	1-11	4-33	4-27	4-27	4-27	4-8	11-25	3-9	10-20	20-14	20-14	28-21	28-21	28-21	28-21	28-21	28-21
2.1-2.5	8-44	7-39	7-39	2-22	3-11	2-22	2-22	2-22	6-50	5-33	5-33	5-33	12-26	12-26	9-26	16-53	36-26	36-26	42-31	42-31	42-31	42-31	42-31	42-31
2.6-3.0	3-17	2-11	2-11	2-22	7-27	2-22	2-22	2-22	2-17	0-0	0-0	0-0	15-33	8-18	14-41	14-29	41-30	41-30	26-19	26-19	26-19	26-19	26-19	26-19
3.1-3.5	2-11	2-11	2-11	3-34	8-31	3-34	3-34	3-34	0-0	1-7	1-7	1-7	7-15	8-18	6-18	8-16	23-17	23-17	22-16	22-16	22-16	22-16	22-16	22-16
3.6-4.0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	2-8	0	0	0	0-0	2-13	2-13	2-13	3-6	2-5	2-6	0-0	7-5	7-5	4-3	4-3	4-3	4-3	4-3	4-3
Total	18-100	18-100%	18-100%	9-100%	26-100%	9-100%	9-100%	9-100%	12-100%	15-100%	15-100%	15-100%	46-100%	45-100%	34-100%	49-100%	137-100%	137-100%	135-100%	135-100%	135-100%	135-100%	135-100%	135-100%

 $\chi^2 = .11$

Median=2.2

.95 > p > .90

 $\chi^2 = .46$

Median=2.11

p=.50

 $\chi^2 = .93$

Median=2.48

.50 > p > .30

 $\chi^2 = 2.16$

Median=2.54

.20 > p > .10

 $\chi^2 = 4.00$

Median=2.42

.05 > p > .02

Median Line

We really have no ready explanation for this finding. Why should Mexican-American student G.P.A.'s be more competitive in one College than another? Is it perhaps because only the best students, both Anglo and Mexican-American enroll in the Colleges of Business, Science and Engineering? Is it perhaps that the poorer students, again of both groups, transfer to the other schools? Perhaps it is our sample, all three of these Colleges had small sample numbers compared to the number of students we sampled from the other two schools. Our finding then is that Mexican-American students, as a group, have somewhat different G.P.A.'s when compared to their fellow Anglo students, considered by the College they are enrolled in. Mexican-American students enrolled in the Colleges of Business, Science and Engineering have about the same G.P.A.'s as the Anglo students enrolled in these Colleges have. Mexican-American students enrolled in the Colleges of Liberal Arts and Education have lower G.P.A.'s than the Anglo students of these Colleges but neither of these differences are statistically significant.

In conclusion, we must say that we endeavored in this paper to discover whether or not Mexican American College students have lower G.P.A.'s than Anglo students who are enrolled in the same University. We have discovered that on the whole they do not. The only relationship that was found to be significant, at the .05 level of confidence, was when the entire sample was used. All other relationships did not meet our requirements for statistical significance, although in many of the cases it was clear that a larger number of Anglo students scored G.P.A.'s above the median than did Mexican-American students. Perhaps ^{it was} this accumulation which was not statistically significant in the small groups ^{which} led us to the statistically significant finding ⁱⁿ the comparison of the large group. We compared G.P.A.'s by high school attended, dividing our sample of students into four high school groups, predominantly Mexican-American, predominantly Anglo, Mixed, and

Outsiders. We found no statistically meaningful differences between Anglo and Mexican-American students who attended each of these kinds of high schools. Although this was true we found that Mexican-American students who come from Mexican high schools have higher G.P.A.'s than do other Mexican-American students. This was true whether we compared them to Anglos they went to school with or Anglos who attended predominantly Anglo high schools. A further comparison of these two groups of students was made with respect to the Colleges in which they were enrolled. Again no statistically meaningful differences were found. However, Mexican-American students in the Colleges of Business, Science and Engineering have G.P.A.'s more in accord with their Anglo contemporaries than do Mexican-American students enrolled in the Colleges of Liberal Arts and Education. All of these findings remain questionable until the ^{+twenty five} ~~five~~ missing student G.P.A.'s are discovered and made part of the study. Until then these findings must remain tentative.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹U.S. Census: March 1972, Population Characteristics P20-No238, Washington, D.C.: Superintendent of Documents, July, 1972, p.5.
- ²U.S. Census: 1970, Final Report PC(1)-C45 Texas, Washington, D.C.: Superintendent of Documents, April 1972, p. 45-439.
- ³Clark, Margaret, Health in the Mexican American Culture, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2nd edition, 1970, p.64.
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- ⁵Crossland, F.E., Minority Access to College, New York: Schocken Books, 1971.